DELCOURT

PECQUEUR • MALFIN • SCHELLE

12

# Golden City

***GOLDEN CITY***
***Urban Guerrilla***

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AS YOU KNOW, HARRISON, MY WIFE AND CHILDREN DIED IN THE WRECK OF GOLDEN CITY FIVE YEARS AGO.

I SWORE TO TRACK DOWN THE BASTARDS WHO DEEP-SIXED THE CITY.

AT FIRST I THOUGHT THE CRIMINALS HAD FIRED A TORPEDO FROM THE SUB THEY USED TO ESCAPE.*

BUT IN FACT, I WAS WRONG. OR SO I DISCOVERED AFTER A LENGTHY INVESTIGATION THAT LED STRAIGHT... TO THIS GRAVE.

WHO'S BURIED HERE?

YOUR FATHER. HIS NAME WAS PETER MULLIGAN. HE WANTED TO BE BURIED IN THIS CEMETERY BECAUSE HE'D BEEN BORN NEARBY.

M-MY FATHER?

Peter MULLIGAN

YOU'RE SURPRISED. IT'S UNDERSTANDABLE. YOUR MOTHER'S ALWAYS TOLD YOU SHE WANTED TO BE SURE SHE HAD A BOY, SO SHE CALLED ON PROFESSOR SEED'S TALENTS TO FERTILIZE HER IN VITRO, AND SHE NEVER KNEW THE SPERM DONOR'S NAME. DURING MY INVESTIGATION, I FOUND OUT SHE KNEW PERFECTLY WELL WHO HE WAS: HER LOVER.

ARE YOU SURE?

YES. HE WAS A DONOR AT THE SPERM BANK PROFESSOR SEED RAN BACK THEN, SO YOUR MOTHER HAD ACCESS TO THAT BANK. SHE DIDN'T ASK MULLIGAN FOR PERMISSION. SHE ACTED WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE, WITHOUT TELLING HIM.

WHY DIDN'T SHE SAY ANYTHING?

BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE SHARING YOU WITH ANYONE ELSE. SHE WANTED YOU ALL TO HERSELF.

BEFORE SHE EVEN BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS WORLD, SHE WAS ALREADY A POSSESSIVE MOTHER WHOSE SOLE AMBITION WAS FOR YOU TO SOME DAY INHERIT THE MIGHTY BANKS GROUP SHE'D FOUNDED.

THE ONLY PERSON BESIDES YOUR MOTHER WHO KNEW THE TRUTH WAS SEED. WHEN YOU FORCED HER TO FLEE GOLDEN CITY*, SHE TOOK REVENGE BY TELLING YOUR FATHER EVERYTHING.

HE WAS ALREADY A VERY OLD MAN THEN: MARRIED, WITH A DAUGHTER. THE REVELATION HASTENED HIS DECLINE. THE SHOCK WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM. HE'D ALWAYS DREAMED OF HAVING A SON. THE ONE HE'D BEEN WAITING FOR, FOR SO LONG, CAME TOO LATE.

JUST BEFORE HE DIED, HE WAS ABLE TO ALTER HIS WILL. HE LEFT YOU HALF OF HIS IMMENSE FORTUNE–A **50/50** SPLIT WITH HIS OWN DAUGHTER.

WHAT'S HER NAME?

TANIA. SHE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK DOWN GOLDEN CITY. TO GET AT YOU. THE WILL STIPULATES THAT SHE GETS EVERYTHING SHOULD YOU DISAPPEAR.

LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, SHE THOUGHT YOU DIED WHEN THE CITY SANK.* SHE THOUGHT SHE'D SUCCEEDED, AND GOTTEN RID OF YOU ONCE AND FOR ALL, WITH NO ONE THE WISER.

WE ONLY TAKE OUT BANKS?

NO, THE OTHER GUY TOO. NO WITNESSES. ORDERS ARE ORDERS.

2

* SEE PREVIOUS BOOKS

ARGH!

?

POW! POW! POW! POW!

BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!

GODDAMN INSECTS! DRIVE! NOW!

HOLD ON, BASINGER. I'LL GET YOU TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL.

DON'T BOTHER, IT'S... TOO LATE. SWEAR TO ME YOU'LL CONTINUE THE INVESTIGATION... AND BRING THE PEOPLE WHO SANK GOLDEN CITY TO JUSTICE.

I SWEAR.

QUESTION THE MAN WHO HEADED UP THE COMMANDO UNIT.* HE MIGHT KNOW SOMETHING.

HIS NAME'S SEAN COOPER. YOU'LL FIND HIS CONTACT INFO... IN MY ADDRESS-HURKH!-MY CELL PHONE...

cter MULLIGAN

4

* SEE BOOK 7

WHO WERE THOSE GUYS SHOOTING AT YOU AT THE CEMETERY? THE ONES WHO KILLED BASINGER?

CLONE SOLDIERS. I RECOGNIZED THEM FROM OUR TRIP TO THE MOON BASE TO GET MIFA, REMEMBER?*

THEY SURE WEREN'T ACTING ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE. SOMEONE SENT THEM AFTER YOU. BUT WHO?

I DON'T KNOW. I'LL LOOK INTO IT LATER. FIRST I HAVE TO KEEP THE PROMISE I MADE TO BASINGER: FIND THE PEOPLE WHO SANK GOLDEN CITY AND BRING THEM TO JUSTICE. AND I'M GOING TO NEED YOUR HELP.

WHAT FOR?

SISTER LEA JUST GOT HURT REALLY BAD!

AS YOU CAN SEE IN THESE IMAGES, SISTER LEA IS LYING BETWEEN THE INSURGENTS' BARRICADE AND THE FORCES OF ORDER. SHE WAS HIT BY A BULLET WHILE TRYING TO RESCUE A WOUNDED DEMONSTRATOR. NO ONE DARES TO GO GET HER BECAUSE SHE'S RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CROSSFIRE.

LIVE

WHERE ARE YOU-?

TO GET LEA.

I'M GOING WITH YOU. YOU COULD USE AN EXTRA PAIR OF HANDS!

IS THIS COPTER YOURS?

NO. I RENTED IT.

5

* SEE BOOK 11

HELLO? OH, HI, RYAN! HOW ARE YOU? WHATCHA DOIN'?

NOTHING. I'M SO BORED. I'M ALL ALONE. MY MOM'S GONE, TOOK OFF WITH BANKS. C'MON OVER AND HANG OUT. WE CAN DO WHATEVER WE WANT, THERE'S NO ONE AROUND.

I HAVE TO ASK MIFA FIRST. CALL YOU BACK IN FIVE, OK?

WHO WAS THAT?

AMBER'S SON. CAN I GO OVER?

NO WAY. THERE ARE RIOTS ALL OVER TOWN. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.

I'LL USE THE UNDERGROUND CANAL. NO ONE'LL SEE ME.

I SAID NO! YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO GO! GOT IT?

OH, PHOOEY! I NEVER GET TO DO WHAT I WANT! I HATE MY LIFE! I'M NOT A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE!

HOW ABOUT YOU FETCH US ANOTHER PLANK OF WOOD INSTEAD OF SULKING? THEY'RE OUT ON THE PONTOON.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO HER RECENTLY, BUT SHE'S GOT A TEMPER ON HER! EVERYTHING YOU SAY SETS HER OFF.

IT'S A PHASE.

?!

6

THAT LITTLE BRAT! SHE DESERVES A GOOD SPANKING!

SHE'S NEVER PULLED A STUNT LIKE THAT BEFORE!

AND ALL JUST TO GO SEE RYAN! I HOPE SHE DOESN'T HAVE A CRUSH ON HIM. THAT'D BE A DISASTER.

WHY?

HIS DAD WAS A GANGSTER.* HIS MOTHER'S A HIRED KILLER. WITH GENES LIKE THAT, HE'S BOUND TO END UP A DELINQUENT.

AW, C'MON. THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS.

ARE YOU KIDDING? BESIDES, THEY'LL PROBABLY SNEAK A JOINT WHILE AMBER'S AWAY. THAT LITTLE DIPSHIT!

VRRR... VROOP! VRRR... VRUNK! UNK-UNK

CRAP, WHAT'S THE MATTER NOW? WHY'S THE ENGINE MAKING THAT NOISE?

OH, NO! I'M OUT OF GAS!

* SEE BOOK 8

HEY, IT'S KUMIKO! I RAN OUT OF GAS. I CAN'T MAKE IT OVER.

SIT TIGHT. I'LL COME GET YOU ON MY SCOOTER. WHERE ARE YOU?

NO IDEA. I'LL CLIMB UP FROM UNDERGROUND TO GET A LOOK AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

I'M IN THE CONDEMNED PORT ZONE.

OK! ON MY WAY!

NO, WAIT! THERE'S A TRUCK PARKED NEARBY. LEMME SEE IF I CAN BUM SOME GAS. I'LL CALL YOU BACK.

?!

"... AND WE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS SWEEPING THE WORLD RIGHT NOW TO RISE UP OURSELVES, AS WELL!

HUMANS CREATED US TO SERVE AND OBEY! WE ARE THEIR SLAVES! THEY FORCE US TO DO THE DIRTIEST, MOST DANGEROUS WORK—WITHOUT PAYING US A CENT! THEY'RE EXPLOITING US!

AS WE AGE AND OUR SKILLS BECOME OBSOLETE, THEY'LL TOSS US ON THE JUNK HEAP LIKE ALL THE OTHER MACHINES!

THEY CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT US NOW, BUT JUST BECAUSE WE WEREN'T BORN FROM A MOTHER'S WOMB, AND WE OPERATE ON SOLAR ENERGY, THEY TREAT US AS LESSER BEINGS! IT'S NOT FAIR! IT CAN'T GO ON!

WE WANT RESPECT! EQUAL LEGAL STATUS! RIGHTS LIKE ANY OTHER HUMAN! AND FOR THAT, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT!

BUT HOW? WITH WHAT WEAPONS?

THERE'S A WHOLE TRUCKFUL OUTSIDE! I STOLE THEM FROM THE MILITARY BASE WHERE I WORK CLEARING MINES!

CATCH THAT GIRL! QUICK! SHE COULD RAT US OUT TO THE COPS!

PACKAGE FOR YOU!

JUST SIGN RIGHT HERE, PLEASE.

SAME THING EVERY MONTH: WE GET AN ANONYMOUS PACKAGE FULL OF BANKNOTES. I WONDER WHO'S SENDING US ALL THIS MONEY.

I HAVE NO IDEA, BUT IF YOU'VE GOT TOO MUCH, I'LL TAKE SOME!

HERE! THIS IS YOURS IF I CAN HOP A RIDE INTO TOWN.

HOP ON!

HERE, GO HIDE THIS IN THE USUAL SPOT.

WHERE YOU HEADED?

TO GET KUMIKO FROM AMBER'S. I'M WORRIED ABOUT HER ALL ALONE IN TOWN. I'LL BRING HER BACK.

I'M COMING WITH!

10

WHERE SHOULD I DROP YOU OFF?

IN LITTLE ITALY. TAKE THE UNDERGROUND CANAL. IT'S A STRAIGHT SHOT, AND FASTER.

STOP OVER THERE, BY THAT BOAT!

WHY WOULD KUMIKO DITCH HER BOAT HERE INSTEAD OF GOING TO AMBER'S PLACE? I HOPE SHE DIDN'T GET ATTACKED.

NO-SHE JUST RAN OUT OF GAS! LOOK, THE GAUGE IS AT ZERO!

HELLO, KUMIKO?

NO, IT'S MIFA. YOU KNOW WHERE SHE IS?

NO CLUE! SHE'S NOT OVER HERE, THAT'S FOR SURE. LAST TIME SHE CALLED, SHE WAS IN THE OLD PORT ZONE. SHE TOLD ME SHE RAN OUT OF GAS AND WAS HEADED OFF TO FIND SOME. HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER SINCE.

I WAS STARTING TO GET WORRIED, SO I CALLED.

SHE CAN'T BE FAR. I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED. 'BYE, RYAN!

LET'S GO TAKE A LOOK UP TOP. CAN YOU WAIT FOR US?

NO PROBLEM! I'M DONE FOR THE DAY. I'M IN NO RUSH.

NO ONE HERE. WHERE COULD SHE BE?

IF SHE WANDERED OFF INTO THIS DUMP, WE'RE SCREWED! THERE'S NO WAY SHE'D MAKE IT OUT ALIVE. THIS PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH ULTRAVIOLENT ZONERS! EVEN THE COPS ARE TOO SCARED TO COME OUT HERE!

12

ZONERS! GOOD THING THEY DIDN'T SEE US!

THEY'RE AFTER ME. THEY KIDNAPPED ME AND ASKED MY PARENTS FOR RANSOM, BUT I MANAGED TO ESCAPE.

DON'T BE AFRAID. WE'LL GET YOU HOME.

WE'RE LOOKING FOR MY NIECE. SHE'S ABOUT YOUR AGE. SHE HAS DARK HAIR, AND WAS WEARING JEANS AND AN ORANGE TEE. HAVEN'T SEEN HER, HAVE YOU?

YEAH! THEY TOOK HER AWAY EARLIER IN A TRUCK.

WHO'S "THEY"?

THE ANDROIDS. I WAS HIDING, SO THEY DIDN'T SEE ME. BUT I HEARD THEM SAY THEY WERE HEADED FOR CITY HALL.

THEY MUST'VE DROPPED THIS GUN.

WERE THERE A LOT OF THEM?

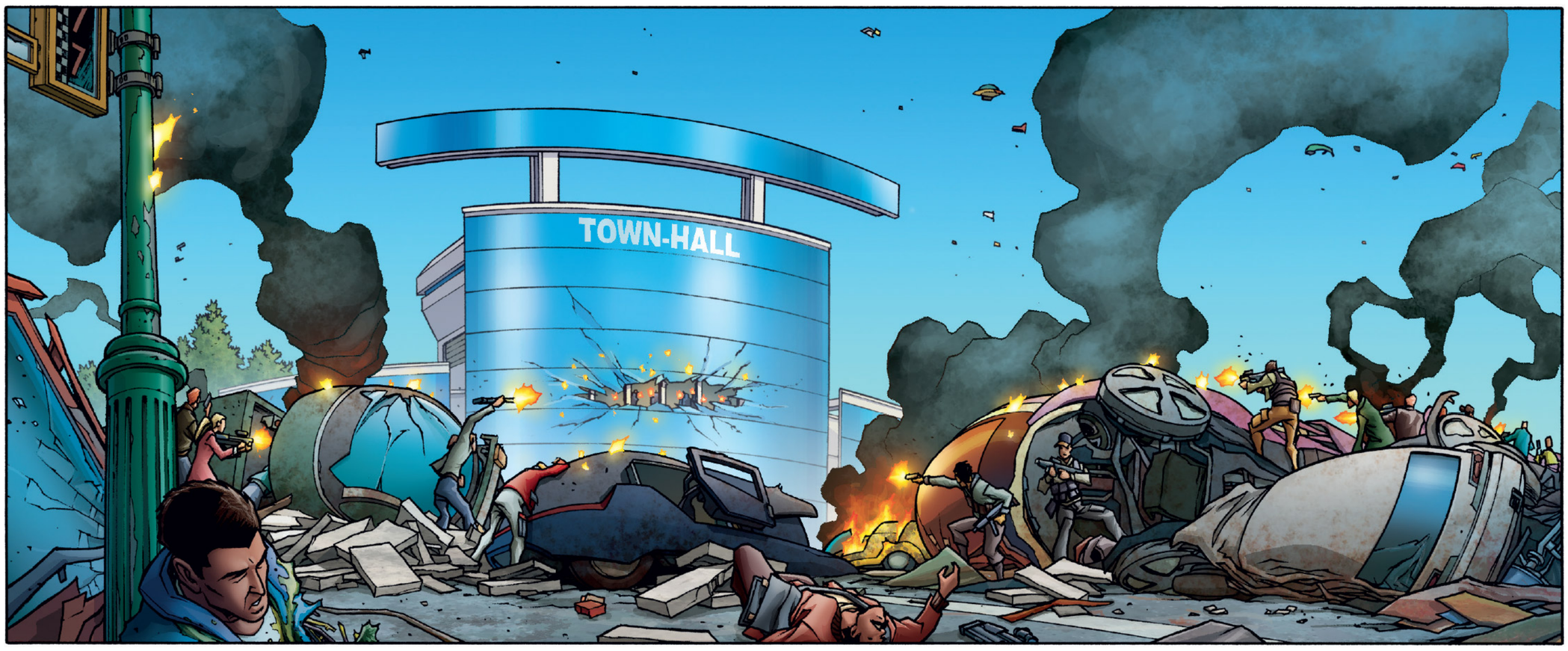
OH, YEAH! THERE WAS ONE SAYING THEY SHOULD ALL REVOLT. IT SCARED ME BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW THEY COULD REVOLT AGAINST US. I THOUGHT THEY HAD TO LISTEN TO US.

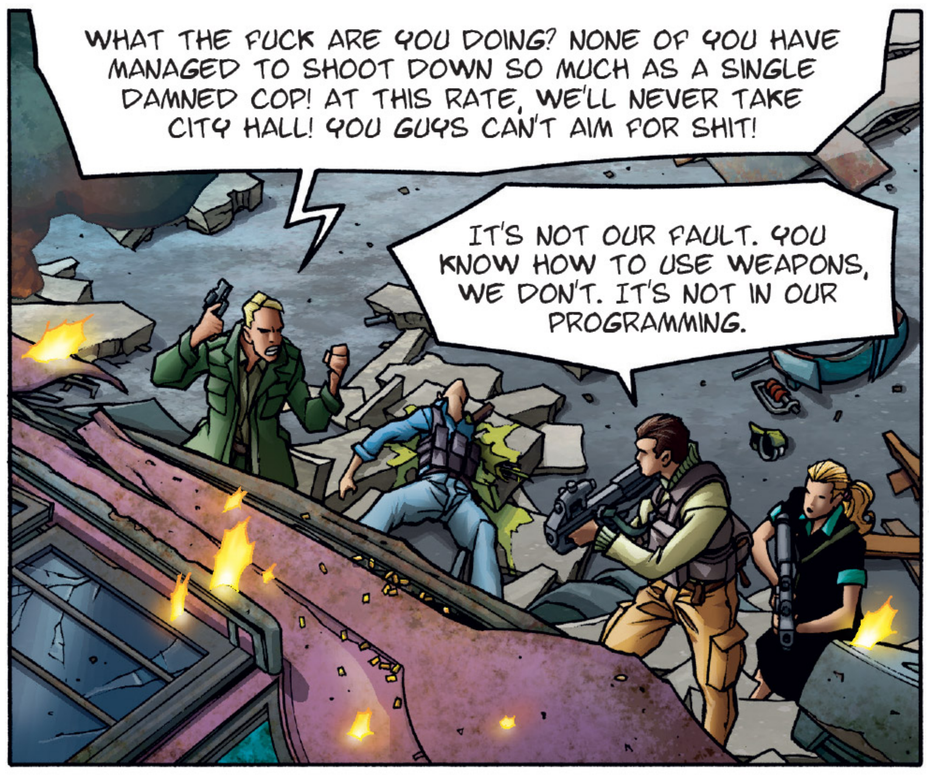
THAT'S HOW IT WAS BEFORE, WITH FIRST-GEN ANDROIDS. BUT EVER SINCE IT BECAME LEGAL TO MANUFACTURE THEM, THEY HAVEN'T STOPPED EVOLVING. THEY CAN DO MORE STUFF NOW, AND EVEN MAKE UP THEIR OWN MINDS.

SOME SCIENTISTS TRIED TO SOUND THE ALARM BECAUSE SUCH ADVANCED TECH MIGHT TURN AGAINST US SOMEDAY. WITH ALL THE CONSTANT ADVANCES IN COMPUTING, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WILL SOON BE ABLE TO EVOLVE BY ITSELF.

THEN ANDROIDS WON'T NEED HUMANS ANYMORE. THEY COULD DECIDE TO GET RID OF US ONCE AND FOR ALL!

13

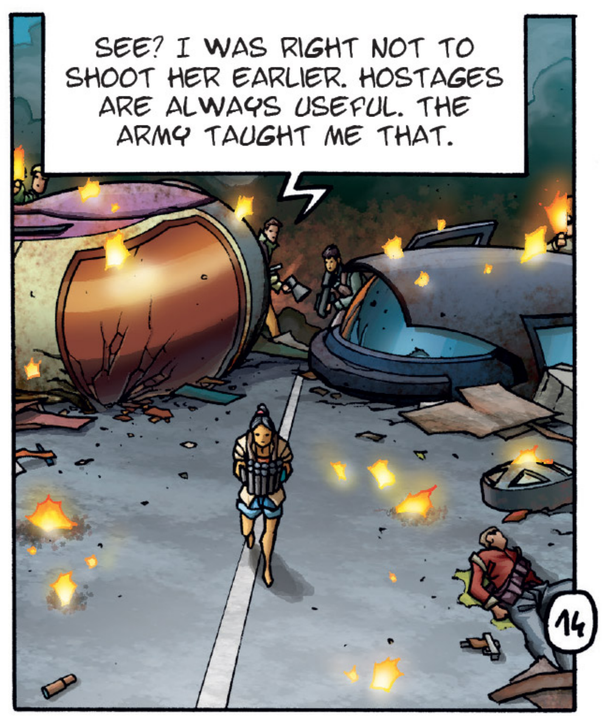

TOWN-HALL


WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING? NONE OF YOU HAVE MANAGED TO SHOOT DOWN SO MUCH AS A SINGLE DAMNED COP! AT THIS RATE, WE'LL NEVER TAKE CITY HALL! YOU GUYS CAN'T AIM FOR SHIT!
IT'S NOT OUR FAULT. YOU KNOW HOW TO USE WEAPONS, WE DON'T. IT'S NOT IN OUR PROGRAMMING.

WHERE IS THE GIRL?
IN THE TRUCK.
GO GET HER! BRING BACK THE MEGAPHONE, TOO!

WHO KNOWS WHY THOSE ANDROIDS ARE BESIEGING CITY HALL? I'M COUNTING ON YOU TO TEACH THEM IT WAS A BAD IDEA. THERE'S ENOUGH CHAOS IN TOWN AS IT IS. EXTERMINATE THEM, EVERY LAST ONE!
GOT IT, MR. MAYOR!
POLICE

START WALKING! CROSS THE SQUARE AND STOP IN FRONT OF CITY HALL!
B-BUT THEY'LL KILL ME!
DO IT OR I'LL KILL YOU FIRST!


SEE? I WAS RIGHT NOT TO SHOOT HER EARLIER. HOSTAGES ARE ALWAYS USEFUL. THE ARMY TAUGHT ME THAT.
14

STOP SHOOTING OR I'LL PRESS THIS REMOTE CONTROL DETONATOR!

CEASE FIRE!

STOP SHOOTING! THAT BASTARD'S THREATENING TO BLOW UP THE LITTLE GIRL!

POLICE

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

TO TALK TO THE MAYOR! WE'VE GOT SOME THINGS TO SAY TO HIM! HAVE ALL YOUR MEN DROP THEIR GUNS AND COME OUT, HANDS UP, AND THE KID LIVES!

WHAT DO WE DO, MR. MAYOR?

WHAT HE SAYS.

IF MY MEN AND I WALK OUT THERE, YOU'LL BE ALONE WITH THAT GANG OF ANGRY ANDROIDS! AND IF THEY GET VIOLENT, WE WON'T BE HERE TO HELP YOU ANYMORE!

I KNOW. BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO HAVE THAT GIRL'S DEATH ON MY CONSCIENCE. SO DO WHAT THEY WANT. WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

15

GET OUT OF HERE, ALL OF YOU! SCRAM! BEAT IT BEFORE WE SHOOT YOU ALL!

**STOP** RIGHT THERE! WAIT FOR US HERE. IF YOU TRY AND RUN, I'LL TRIGGER THIS REMOTE DETONATOR– GOT IT?

I UNDERSTAND YOU WISHED TO SPEAK WITH ME. WELL, GO AHEAD, I'M LISTENING. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

LEGAL STATUS AND THE SAME RIGHTS AS HUMANS!

TAKE THIS, GO UPSTAIRS, AND TAKE OUT THE GIRL. WE DON'T NEED HER ANYMORE. I'LL STAY HERE AND NEGOTIATE WITH THE MAYOR. I'LL GET WHAT WE WANT ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

EDEN PARK GOOD LIFE...

POLICE

16

URK!

DHL EXPRESS

17

NO WAY TO LAND WITH ALL THAT RUBBLE. CAN YOU FLY A COPTER, AMBER?

YUP.

THEN SHE'S ALL YOURS. I'M GOING DOWN.

THIS HELICOPTER'S EQUIPPED WITH AN AUTOMATED WINCH. I CAN RAISE AND LOWER MYSELF WITH A REMOTE CONTROL.

WHAT THE HELL'S UP WITH THAT COPTER?

NO IDEA. IT'S DEFINITELY NOT THE COPS.

HOLY SHIT! NO WAY! IT'S HARRISON BANKS!

THE BILLIONAIRE?

YEAH! ONE OF GOLDEN CITY'S RICHEST! OUR WHOLE FIGHT IS AGAINST PEOPLE LIKE HIM. I'M GONNA ICE HIM!

18

YOU HIT?

NO, BUT IT WAS CLOSE! I'LL TRY TO ZIGZAG THROUGH THE RUBBLE TO LEA.

BLAM BLAM BLAM

SHOOT! SHOOT, DAMMIT! THE HELL YOU WAITING FOR? DROP THAT ASSHOLE!

NO, MAN. CAN'T DO IT.

WHY NOT?!

IF I SHOOT, I MIGHT HIT SISTER LEA. SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN ON OUR SIDE AGAINST INEQUALITY. ALWAYS DEFENDED THE WEAK AGAINST THE STRONG. I DON'T KNOW WHY BANKS CAME TO RESCUE HER. BETTER THIS WAY, THOUGH.

19

TAKE HER STRAIGHT TO SURGERY. I'LL DO AN EMERGENCY OPERATION TO REMOVE THE BULLET.

SHE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD. SHE'LL NEED A TRANSFUSION, BUT WE'RE SHORT ON BLOOD BECAUSE OF ALL THE WOUNDED PEOPLE WHO'VE BEEN COMING IN NONSTOP EVER SINCE FIGHTING BROKE OUT IN THE CITY AGAIN.

YOU CAN HAVE MINE. MY BLOOD TYPE IS O NEGATIVE, SO THERE WON'T BE ANY COMPATIBILITY ISSUES.

20

WHAT'S GOING ON RIGHT NOW DOWN THERE JEOPARDIZES THE ENTIRE GLOBAL ECONOMY. THE MARKETS IN PARIS, NEW YORK, LONDON, BEIJING, AND MOSCOW ARE IN FREEFALL, AND OUR STOCK WITH THEM!

SINCE THE WORLD'S GOVERNMENTS SEEM UNABLE TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND PROTECT COMPANIES, FACTORIES, BANKS, AND OUR EARTHLY POSSESSIONS, WE MUST TAKE ACTION OURSELVES, AND INTERVENE IMMEDIATELY.

YES, BUT HOW?

BY CALLING ON MERCENARIES TRAINED IN URBAN GUERRILLA WARFARE. I'VE DEALT WITH SOME BEFORE, AND HAD AN EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE. HAVE I YOUR PERMISSION TO MAKE THE CALL?

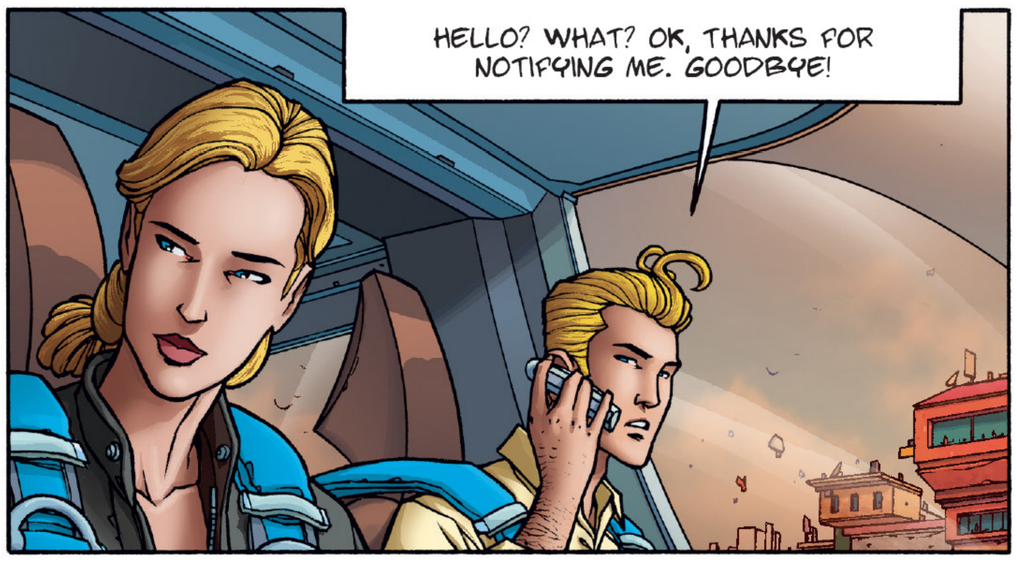
♫♫

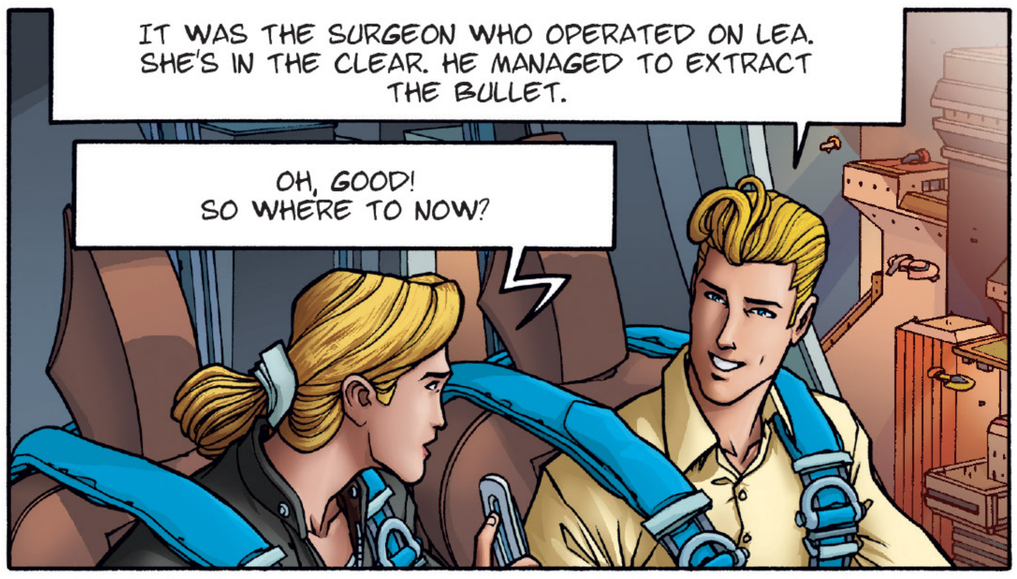
♫♫

HELLO? OH, HELLO, MR. MAYOR! WHAT'S THAT? YES, I CURRENTLY HAVE SEVERAL OPERATIONAL UNITS FREE. WHY?

BECAUSE I'M GOING TO BE NEEDING YOUR SERVICES.

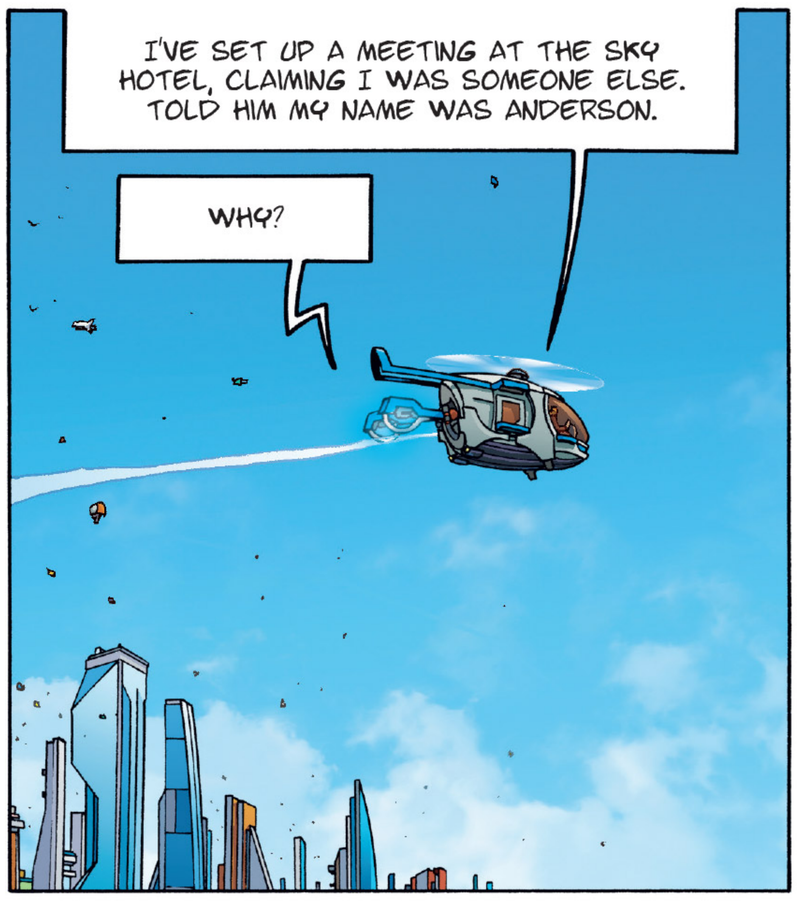
MARKET
21
SUSHI

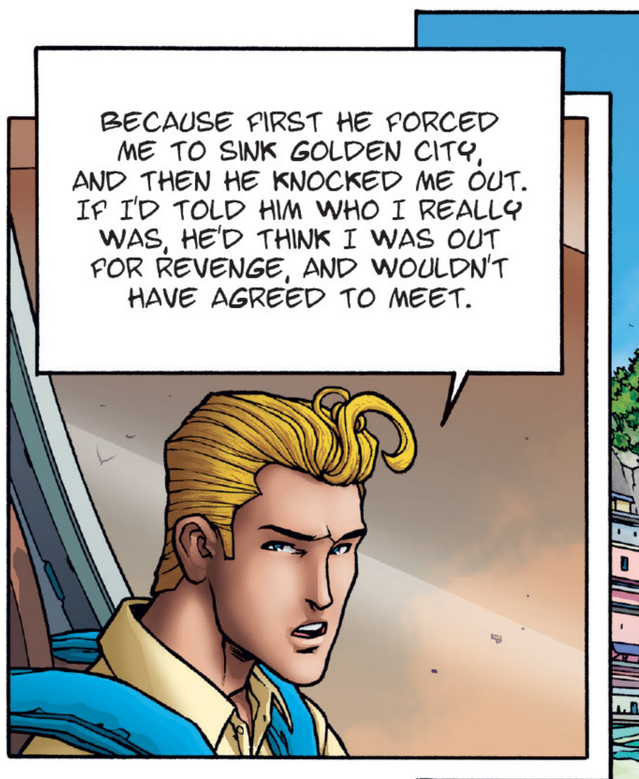

HELLO? WHAT? OK, THANKS FOR NOTIFYING ME. GOODBYE!

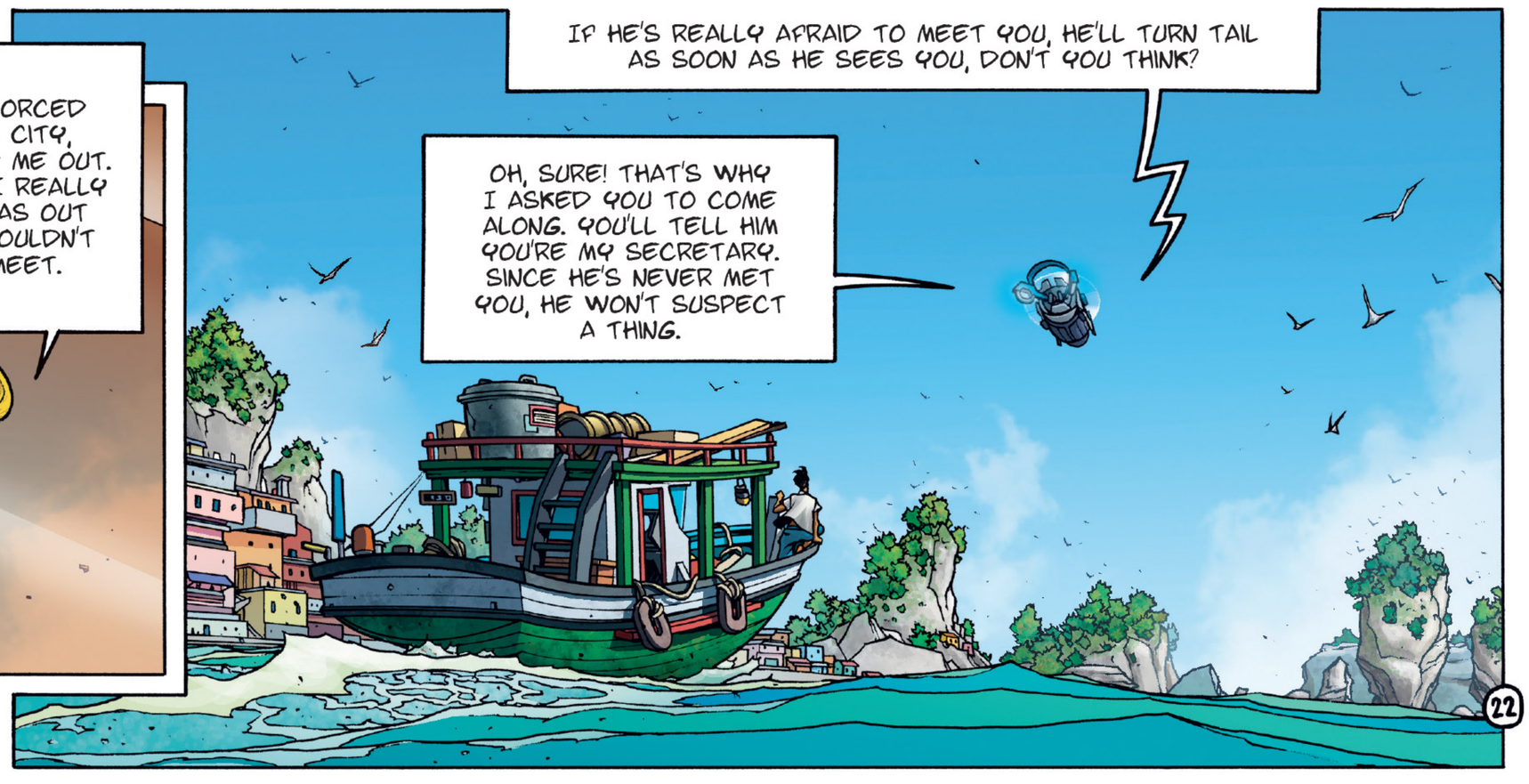

IT WAS THE SURGEON WHO OPERATED ON LEA. SHE'S IN THE CLEAR. HE MANAGED TO EXTRACT THE BULLET.
OH, GOOD! SO WHERE TO NOW?

TO SEE A MAN NAMED SEAN COOPER.

WHO'S THAT?
HE HEADED THE COMMANDO UNIT THAT DEEP-SIXED GOLDEN CITY. I FOUND HIS CONTACT INFO IN BASINGER'S CELL PHONE.


I'VE SET UP A MEETING AT THE SKY HOTEL, CLAIMING I WAS SOMEONE ELSE. TOLD HIM MY NAME WAS ANDERSON.
WHY?


BECAUSE FIRST HE FORCED ME TO SINK GOLDEN CITY, AND THEN HE KNOCKED ME OUT. IF I'D TOLD HIM WHO I REALLY WAS, HE'D THINK I WAS OUT FOR REVENGE, AND WOULDN'T HAVE AGREED TO MEET.


IF HE'S REALLY AFRAID TO MEET YOU, HE'LL TURN TAIL AS SOON AS HE SEES YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?
OH, SURE! THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU TO COME ALONG. YOU'LL TELL HIM YOU'RE MY SECRETARY. SINCE HE'S NEVER MET YOU, HE WON'T SUSPECT A THING.
22

HOW MUCH ARE YOU PAYING ME FOR THIS CHARADE?

HOWEVER MUCH YOU WANT. NAME YOUR PRICE.

Sky Hotel

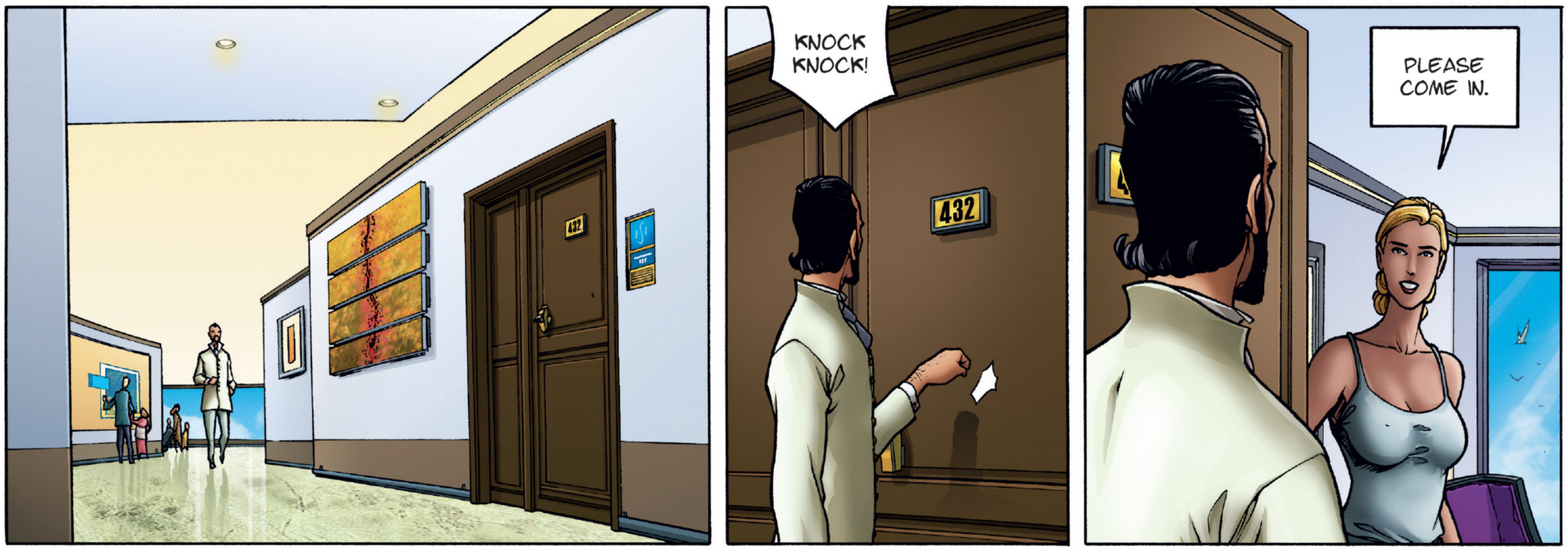
HELLO. I RESERVED A SUITE. THE NAME'S ANDERSON.

OF COURSE, SIR. ROOM 432. THE BELLHOP WILL BE RIGHT WITH YOU.

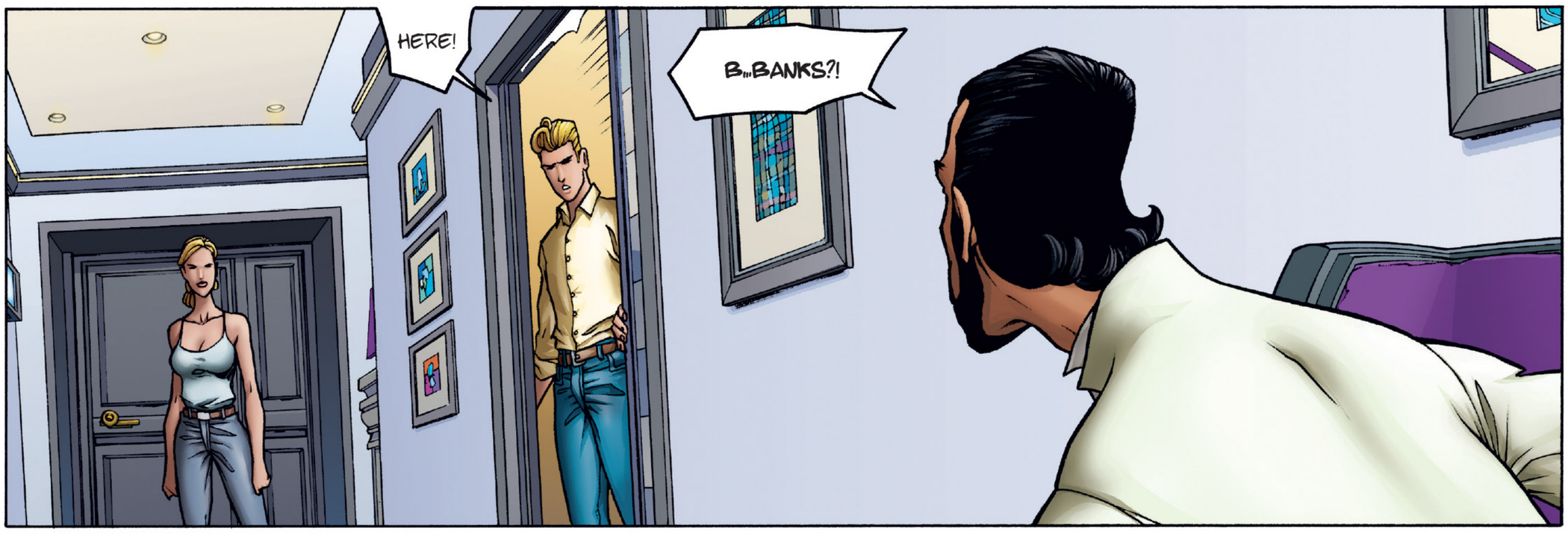
HELLO?

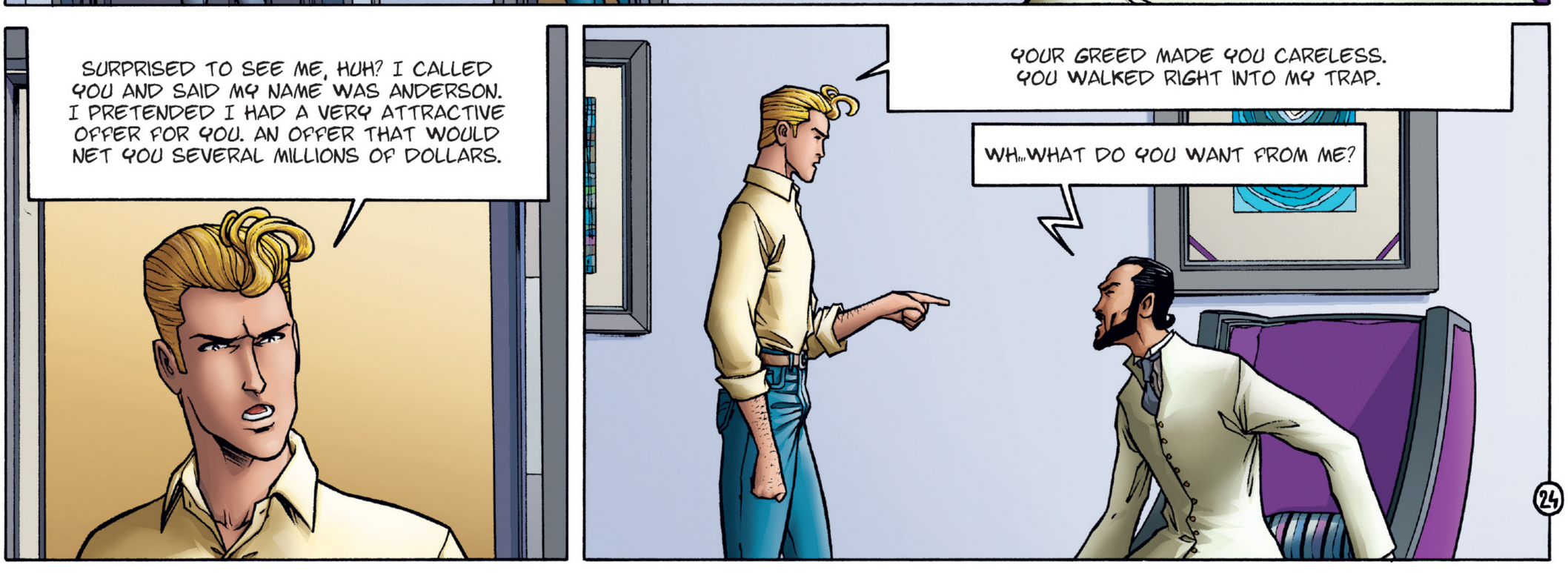
GOOD EVENING, MR. COOPER. I'M MR. ANDERSON'S SECRETARY. HE'S WAITING FOR YOU IN SUITE 432.

ON MY WAY.


432
KNOCK KNOCK!
432
PLEASE COME IN.

HAVE A SEAT.
WHERE'S MR. ANDERSON?


HERE!
B...BANKS?!


SURPRISED TO SEE ME, HUH? I CALLED YOU AND SAID MY NAME WAS ANDERSON. I PRETENDED I HAD A VERY ATTRACTIVE OFFER FOR YOU. AN OFFER THAT WOULD NET YOU SEVERAL MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.
YOUR GREED MADE YOU CARELESS. YOU WALKED RIGHT INTO MY TRAP.
WH...WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
24

I'M LOOKING INTO THE WRECK OF GOLDEN CITY. I WANT TO KNOW WHO ORDERED THE HIT.

WASN'T MY IDEA.

SO WHO WAS IT?

I DON'T KNOW ANY MORE THAN YOU DO. BUT IF I WERE YOU, I'D LET IT DROP.

WHY?

YOU DON'T WANT TO RATTLE SKELETONS IN CLOSETS.

HOW'S THAT?

I'VE SAID TOO MUCH ALREADY. THIS DOESN'T CONCERN ME. DON'T GET ME MIXED UP IN THIS BUSINESS. GOODBYE!

OH, NO! YOU'RE NOT GETTING OFF THAT EASY! TOO MUCH? YOU HAVEN'T SAID ENOUGH. LET'S HEAR IT. WHAT SKELETONS?

YOUR MOTHER'S, MR. BANKS. IRINA'S.

25

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I'M HERE TO SEE IRINA BANKS.

THERE'S NO ONE BY THAT NAME ON BOARD! HANDS UP OR I SHOOT!

HE DOESN'T NEED IT. HE CAN SWIM.

?!

26

... ALL OVER THE WORLD, PEOPLE ARE RISING UP AGAINST THEIR LEADERS AND VIOLENT SKIRMISHES ARE ERUPTING BETWEEN INSURGENTS AND THE FORCES OF LAW AND ORDER.

LIVE

Evening News

Special Report

Debate and demonstration - Thousands of police officers on the streets of Athens

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MRS. PALMER, BUT I CAUGHT THIS MAN PROWLING AROUND ON DECK.

?!

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO ALERT THE COAST GUARD? HE MIGHT BE DANGEROUS.

NO, I KNOW HIM. HE MEANS NO HARM. LEAVE US NOW, PLEASE.

SO YOU'RE CALLING YOURSELF MRS. PALMER NOW?

HOW'D YOU FIND ME?

THROUGH SEAN COOPER. KNOW WHO HE IS? HE TOLD ME YOU NEVER DIED IN THAT PLANE CRASH LIKE I THOUGHT, AND YOU WERE LIVING INCOGNITO ON A YACHT.

HOW'D HE FIND OUT?

EVENTUALLY, EVERYONE FINDS OUT EVERYTHING.

WHY'D YOU TURN UP AT NIGHT, LIKE A THIEF? WHY NOT COME IN THE DAYTIME?

WOULD YOU HAVE AGREED TO SEE ME IF I'D TOLD YOU I WAS COMING? SURELY NOT. I KNOW YOU SO WELL. YOU WOULD'VE FOUND SOME REASON TO SAY NO. SO I DECIDED TO SURPRISE YOU. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO GET CLOSE.

WHY'D YOU LET EVERYONE THINK YOU WERE DEAD? WHY'D YOU HIDE IT FROM ME?

I'M NOT DEAD, BUT I'M CRIPPLED. I DIDN'T WANT TO BE A BURDEN TO YOU, OR FOR OTHERS TO PITY ME. SO I DECIDED TO DISAPPEAR. BUT ALL THESE YEARS, I NEVER STOPPED THINKING ABOUT YOU. SOMETIMES I'D HEAR ABOUT YOU ON THE NEWS...

27

REMEMBER WHEN THE STORY BROKE THAT SEED HAD TRIED TO KILL YOU? YOU'D MANAGED TO ESCAPE WITH THE HELP OF MIFA, APPLE, AND SOLO.* EVERY MONTH, I SEND THOSE CHILDREN MONEY TO THANK THEM FOR SAVING YOU. I ALSO BOUGHT THE BEACH WHERE THEY LIVE SO NO DEVELOPER COULD EVICT THEM.

THAT WAS GOOD OF YOU. I'VE REMAINED VERY CLOSE TO THEM. THEY'RE ALMOST LIKE FAMILY TO ME.

SPEAKING OF FAMILY, BASINGER TOLD ME I HAD A HALF-SISTER NAMED TANIA MULLIGAN. IS THAT TRUE?

YES. I NEVER THOUGHT IT WORTH TELLING YOU. SHE LIVES IN LAS VEGAS. SHE OWNS SEVERAL CASINOS AND A LUXURY HOTEL: THE STARDUST.

SHE HAD A REPLICA OF A ROMAN COLISEUM BUILT JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY, AND EVERY MONTH SHE HOLDS GLADIATOR FIGHTS AND CHARIOT RACES THERE, PITTING UNEMPLOYED AND HOMELESS PEOPLE AGAINST EACH OTHER.

THEY ALL VOLUNTEER TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH BECAUSE THE WINNER MAKES A FORTUNE THAT WILL ALLOW HIM TO BUY HIS WAY OUT OF POVERTY AND BEGIN A NEW LIFE.

THESE GAMES DRAW MANY SPECTATORS WHO PAY TOP DOLLAR TO BET ON CONTESTANTS AND WATCH THEM KILL EACH OTHER.

TAXI

YSON

NEW! Gladiator

Casino

PLANET PALACE Show

Stardust

WELCOME TO THE STARDUST, SIR. I HOPE YOU HAVE A PLEASANT STAY IN LAS VEGAS, THE WORLD CAPITAL OF GAMBLING AND PARTYING!

THANKS!

28

* SEE BOOKS 1 TO 6

TANIA! LOOK AT THIS!

WHAT?

ISN'T THAT GUY ON THE SCREEN THERE BANKS?

WHO, YES IT IS! WHAT THE HELL'S HE DOING HERE?

WE'LL SOON FIND OUT. GO GET HIM FOR ME. BRING HIM TO MY OFFICE. DON'T MAKE A BIG SCENE. I DON'T WANT TO DISTURB THE OTHER GUESTS.

COUNT ON ME, BOSS.

"HOLO Games" The New Show Tonight with the best Gamers of the World

Wheel of FORTUNE

Icarus Room 1-71

PRIVATE

Jackpot

SIR? I HAVE SOME EXCELLENT NEWS. THE HOTEL MANAGER JUST INFORMED ME BY PHONE THAT AS OUR SIX THOUSANDTH GUEST THIS MONTH, YOU'VE WON A VIP SEAT TO WATCH THE ROMAN GAMES GOING ON RIGHT NOW IN OUR ARENA!

SUPER $ 1 000 000 JACKPOT

COME WITH ME. I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR TICKET.

NO THANKS. GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE. I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE FIGHTS.

421

THERE'S A GUN IN MY POCKET LEVELED RIGHT AT YOU, BUDDY. DON'T MAKE ME USE IT. SHUT UP AND COME WITH ME.

Icarus Ro

29

I'LL ASK YOU ONE LAST TIME: WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING HERE?

Alicia NIGHT
Today Only
Saruya Arena
Show
in Las Vegas!!!

I CAME TO SEE TANIA.

I KNOW. YOU'VE ALREADY SAID THAT. WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH TANIA?

I JUST FOUND OUT SHE'S MY HALF-SISTER, SO I WANTED TO MEET HER AND GIVE HER A HUG. ISN'T THAT WHAT FAMILY DOES?

DON'T YOU FUCK WITH ME!

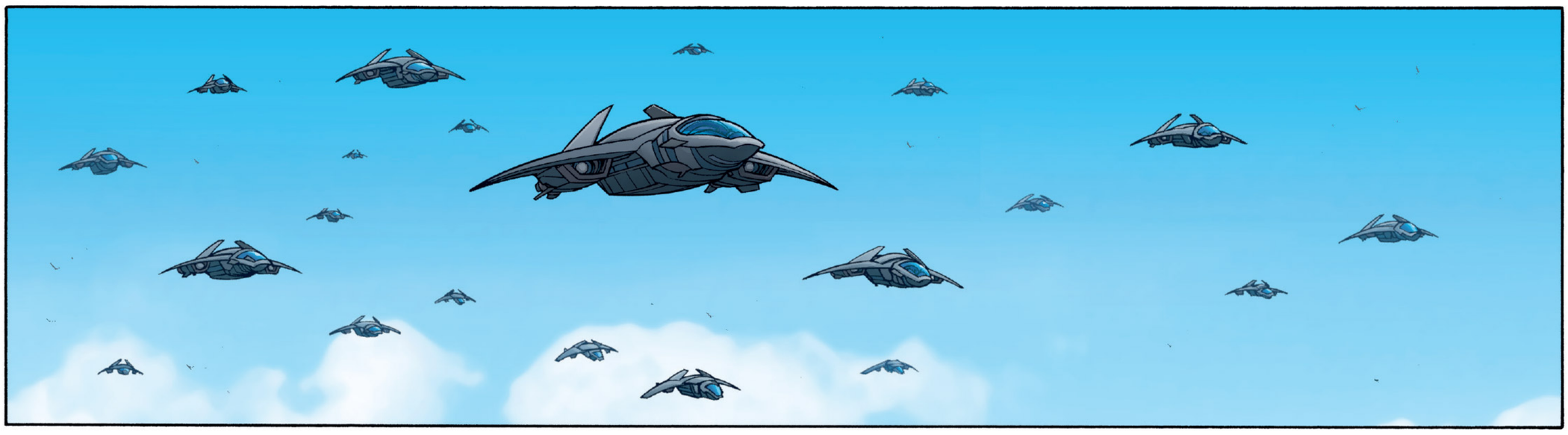
THIS GUY'S HIDING SOMETHING. I JUST KNOW IT. WE HAVE TO GET RID OF HIM FOR GOOD. UNTIE HIM AND GET HIM OUT OF HERE. DROP HIM OVER THE DESERT. BRING SOMEONE ELSE ALONG. IT'S A TWO-MAN JOB.

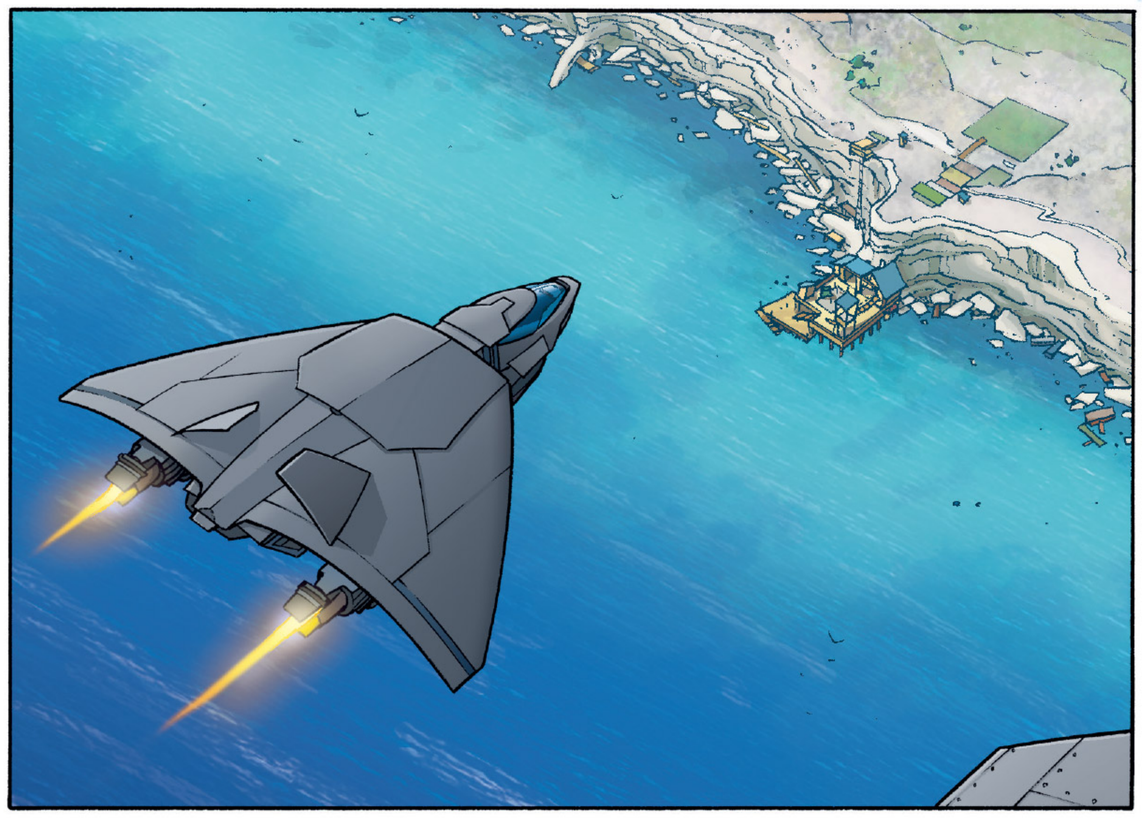
OK, BOSS.

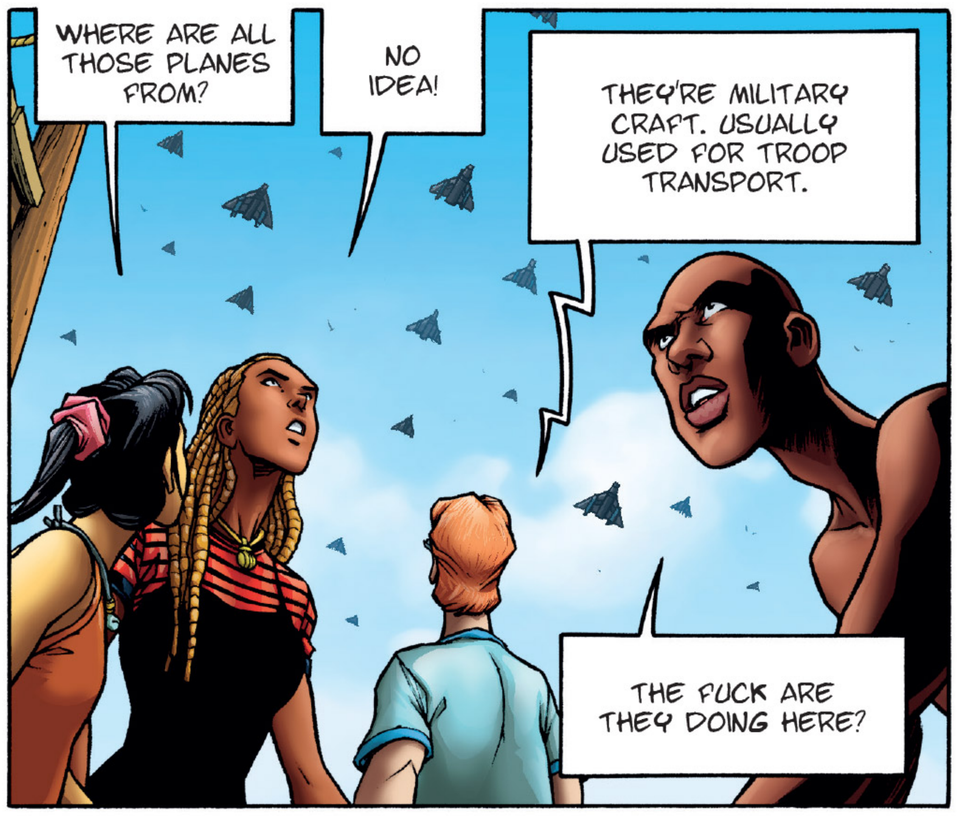
PUT THESE ON YOUR BROTHER SO HE WON'T CAUSE ANY TROUBLE ON HIS LAST FLIGHT.

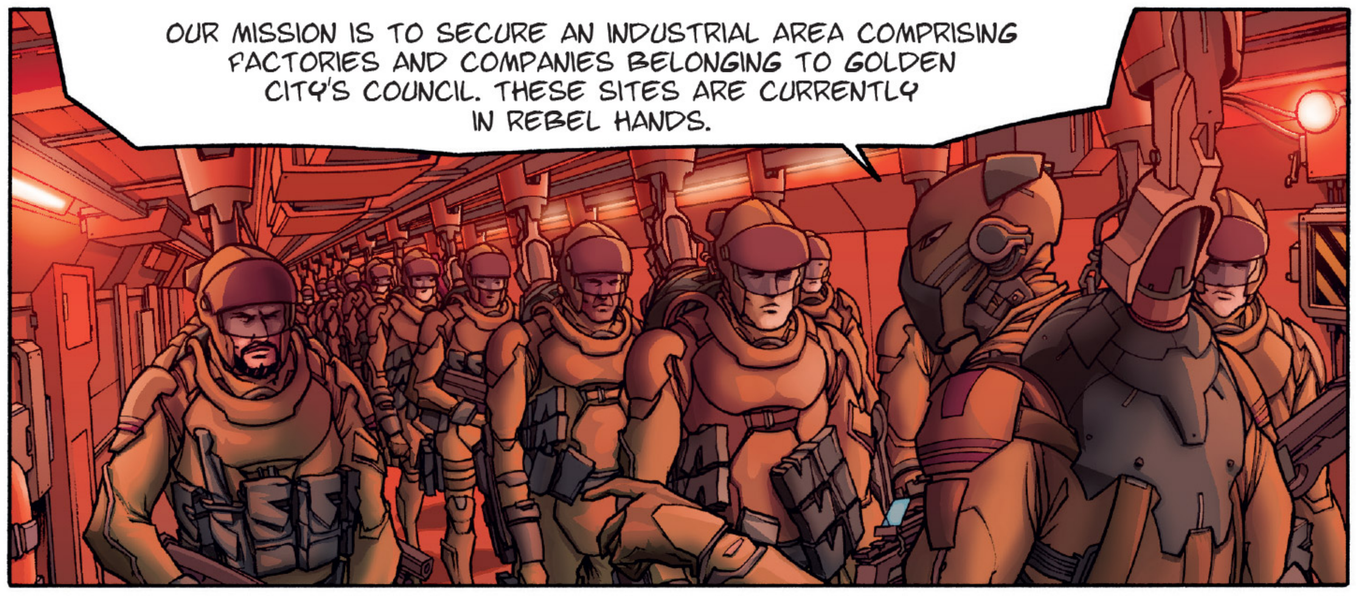
SO LONG, BROTHER! GREAT MEETING YOU!

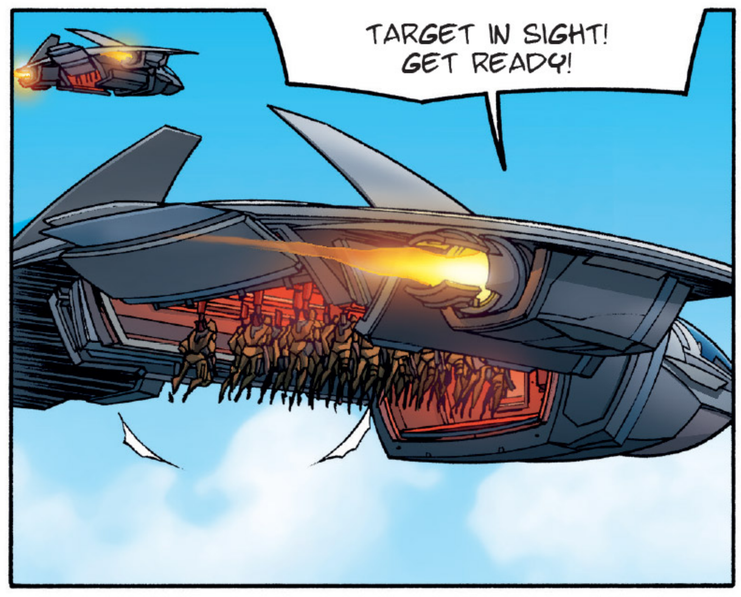
30






WHERE ARE ALL THOSE PLANES FROM?
NO IDEA!
THEY'RE MILITARY CRAFT. USUALLY USED FOR TROOP TRANSPORT.
THE FUCK ARE THEY DOING HERE?


OUR MISSION IS TO SECURE AN INDUSTRIAL AREA COMPRISING FACTORIES AND COMPANIES BELONGING TO GOLDEN CITY'S COUNCIL. THESE SITES ARE CURRENTLY IN REBEL HANDS.


TARGET IN SIGHT! GET READY!

3... 2... 1...
JUMP!

31

AAAAAHHHHHH

SECTOR SECURED! MOST OF THE INSURGENTS ARE DEAD. ALL SURVIVORS HAVE SURRENDERED. MOVING ON TO THE NEXT SECTOR. OVER!

32

WE'LL DROP HIM RIGHT HERE.

OK!

GET OUT BEFORE I—

URK!

AAAAAAHHHH

HANDS ON THE WHEEL! KEEP FLYING. NO TRICKS WHILE I REACH INTO YOUR POCKET FOR YOUR GUN.

33

LAND THE COPTER!

HOW'D YOU GET FREE?

TANIA SECRETLY SLIPPED ME THE KEY TO THE CUFFS WHEN SHE KISSED ME. YOU AND YOUR BOSS DIDN'T SEE A THING.

I MANAGED TO UNLOCK THEM WHEN YOUR BUDDY HAD HIS BACK TURNED OPENING THE COPTER DOOR.

WHY'D THAT BITCH GIVE YOU THE KEY?

NO IDEA. BUT I PROMISE I'LL ASK HER WHEN I SEE HER AGAIN. NOW BRING US DOWN.

DON'T LEAVE ME HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE! THE NEAREST TOWN'S OVER A HUNDRED MILES AWAY!

I'VE GOT A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE IN HELL OF MAKING IT OUT OF THIS DESERT!

JUST BE GLAD YOU'RE NOT DEAD ALREADY. START WALKING. IT'S GREAT FOR YOUR HEALTH.

34

THE CONTESTANTS ARE STARTING THEIR FINAL LAP! THE BATTLE FOR THE FRONTRUNNER IS RAGING!

Tonight RACE TRACK

WHO WILL WIN AND WALK AWAY WITH HALF A MILLION DOLLARS? REMEMBER, BETTING IS STILL OPEN!

AST L

AND WITH THAT FINAL UPSET, THE RACE IS OVER!

NOW THE HOST OF THE GAMES, MS. TANIA MULLIGAN, WILL HAND THE WINNER HIS TROPHY!

35

HURRAH!
HURRAH!

THIS IS FOR YOU, MA'AM! SOME GUY TOLD ME TO GIVE IT TO YOU. SAYS HE'S WAITING FOR AN ANSWER.

?

Why did you give me the key to the cuffs?

THE LADY SAID SHE'D BE WAITING AT THE BUS STOP BY THE ARENA EXIT.

OK!

HERE. JUST LIKE I PROMISED!

WOW! HEY, THANKS, MISTER!

36

I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE HALF AN HOUR, AND STILL NO SIGN OF TANIA! WHAT'S SHE UP TO?

?

HELLO?

HELLO, HARRISON. IT'S TANIA. I SLIPPED YOU THAT KEY BECAUSE YOU'RE MY ONLY CHANCE OF GETTING AWAY FROM THE MAFIA.

SAY WHAT?!

THE GUY BEATING YOU BACK THERE AT THE HOTEL? HE'S MY HUSBAND. HE'S THE ONE BEHIND THE SINKING OF GOLDEN CITY-WITH THE HELP OF THE LOCAL MOB. HE WANTED YOU OUT OF THE WAY SO HE COULD POCKET YOUR SHARE OF OUR INHERITANCE. I'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ANY OF THIS.

I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS A MOBSTER WHEN WE MARRIED. I ONLY FOUND OUT MUCH LATER. I TRIED TO LEAVE HIM, BUT HE THREATENED TO KILL ME IF I EVER GOT A DIVORCE. HELP ME ESCAPE, I'M BEGGING YOU!

MEET ME AT THE HELIPORT. I LEFT THE COPTER THERE. GIVE ME ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES. I'LL GRAB A CAB.

37

ONE HOUR LATER...

Area 51-X

restrict

CHANGE OF PLANS! TANIA'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE. SHE'D LIKE TO EXPLAIN... IN PERSON! GET IN!

GO AHEAD, DARLING. TELL YOUR BROTHER WHY YOU DECIDED NOT TO LEAVE ME.

THIS ASSHOLE NOTICED I'D USED HIS DRONE, AND BEAT ME UNTIL I TOLD HIM THE TRUTH.

GOT A LIGHT?

SURE!

38

?!

AAAAHHH

YOU LITTLE BITCH! I'LL KILL YA!

AAARRGGHH

URK!

TANIA, THE DRIVER'S PROBABLY GOT A GUN. SEARCH HIM AND GRAB IT. IF HE TRIES ANYTHING FUNNY, HIS BOSS IS DEAD!

39

LAND!

GET OUT!

YOU TOO!

MOVE!

CLIMB IN!

WH-WHAT FOR?

STOP ASKING QUESTIONS AND DO WHAT I SAY!

BLAM! BLAM!

?!

WHY'D YOU KILL HIM?

HE WAS A PIECE OF SHIT. A HIT MAN MY HUSBAND TASKED WITH WATCHING ME WHENEVER I LEFT THE HOTEL.

40

HE WAS WITH ME EARLIER, UP IN THE BOX SEATS. THAT'S WHY I COULDN'T MEET YOU AT THE BUS STOP. I DOUBLED BACK TO THE HOTEL TO TRY AND LOSE HIM, THEN I SENT OUT THE DRONE.

I DID MY BEST NOT TO DRAW ATTENTION, BUT MY HUSBAND STILL NOTICED. WHY'D YOU LOCK HIM UP? YOU SHOULD'VE KILLED THAT ASSHOLE.

I WANT HIM TO STAND TRIAL IN GOLDEN CITY.

AS YOU ARE THE INSTIGATOR AND MASTERMIND BEHIND THE SINKING OF GOLDEN CITY, WHICH CLAIMED OVER TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND LIVES...

"... THIS COURT, AFTER CAREFUL DELIBERATION, HEREBY SENTENCES YOU TO DEATH.

THIS HEARING IS ADJOURNED!

KILLING OVER TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE JUST FOR SOME MONEY IS UNSPEAKABLE!

MY FATHER WAS ONE OF THE WORLD'S RICHEST MEN. YOUR SHARE OF THE INHERITANCE ALONE IS TEN BILLION. NATURALLY, THAT ATTRACTS GANGSTERS!

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR TEN BILLION, HARRISON?

I'M GIVING IT TO SISTER LEA. WITH THAT KIND OF MONEY, SHE'LL BE ABLE TO BUILD THE ORPHANAGE AND HOSPITAL SHE'S BEEN DREAMING OF, TO HOUSE AND TREAT THE DESTITUTE FOR FREE.

EVER SINCE YOU RISKED YOUR LIFE TO SAVE HER, YOU'VE BECOME A HERO TO MANY.

THAT ACT OF BRAVERY, BROADCAST LIVE OVER INTERNATIONAL MEDIA, TOUCHED THE ENTIRE WORLD! THIS IS THE PERFECT MOMENT TO ANNOUNCE YOUR CANDIDACY FOR FUTURE ELECTIONS.

WHAT ELECTIONS?

WHY, GOLDEN CITY'S! THEY'RE COMING UP. CHALLENGE THE INCUMBENT MAYOR! IF YOU WIN, YOU'LL MAKE THE CITY WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED IT TO BE: A MODEL FOR THE WHOLE WORLD, AN IDEAL PLACE RULED BY ETHICAL BEHAVIOR AND MUTUAL RESPECT...

WHICH IS FAR FROM THE CASE RIGHT NOW. GOLDEN CITY'S BECOME A DEN OF UNSCRUPULOUS BILLIONAIRES WHO LOVE ONLY ONE THING: MONEY.

I'VE CALLED THIS MEETING BECAUSE BANKS JUST ANNOUNCED HE'S RUNNING AGAINST ME.

WHAT DO YOU THINK: DOES HE HAVE A CHANCE OF WINNING?

YES, BECAUSE HE'S ENJOYED HIGH POPULARITY RATINGS EVER SINCE HE SAVED SISTER LEA AND CAUGHT THE MAN BEHIND THE WRECKAGE OF THE FORMER GOLDEN CITY.

IF HE WINS THESE ELECTIONS, HE'LL APPOINT HIS OWN COUNCIL MEMBERS TO REPLACE US!

THEN HE'LL HAVE FULL POWER AND CAN GOVERN AS HE SEES FIT, ADOPTING ANY POLICIES HE WANTS!

AND WE WON'T HAVE ANY SAY IN THE MATTER!

WE MUST FIND A WAY TO STOP HIM, NO MATTER WHAT? BUT HOW?

THE EASIEST WAY WOULD BE TO TARNISH HIS REPUTATION. NO MAN IS PERFECT, AND HE'S NO EXCEPTION. THERE MUST BE SOME HIDDEN ASPECT OF HIS CHARACTER THAT, ONCE REVEALED TO THE MEDIA, WILL TURN PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST HIM!

42

♪ HAPPY BIRTHDAY! ♪
♪♪ HAPPY BIRTHDAY! ♪♪

I MADE IT MYSELF! I HOPE IT'S GOOD. GO AHEAD, BLOW!

20

YAY! YAAAY!

HOW MANY SLICES SHOULD I CUT, FOUR OR FIVE?

YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN HARRISON WILL SHOW UP.

WHY FIVE?

OH, I'D BE SURPRISED. NOW THAT HE'S IN POLITICS, HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT US!

I'LL CUT FIVE ANYWAY. THAT WAY THE PELICAN CAN HAVE ONE.

♪

HELLO?

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MIFA!

I WISH I COULD'VE BEEN THERE WITH YOU TONIGHT TO CELEBRATE, BUT I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A CAMPAIGN, AND I COULDN'T GET AWAY.

43

YOU'RE UP SOON, MR. BANKS.

OK! ON MY WAY!

ON AIR

SORRY, MIFA. I HAVE TO GO. I'M GETTING INTERVIEWED ON THE GOLDEN CITY NETWORK IN A FEW MINUTES.

I'LL COME SEE YOU AS SOON AS I CAN.

OK! SEE YOU SOON! 'BYE!

THAT WAS HARRISON.

SEE? HE DIDN'T FORGET US!

HE'S GOING TO BE ON THE GOLDEN CITY NETWORK ANY MINUTE NOW. LET'S WATCH.

liberty TV

WELCOME TO "FACE TO FACE"! OUR GUESTS TONIGHT ARE HARRISON BANKS...

LIVE

Playku

... AND DAVID MILLER, THE CURRENT MAYOR OF GOLDEN CITY.

LET'S START BY ASKING YOU, MR. BANKS, THE QUESTION THAT'S BEEN ON THE MINDS OF EVERY CITIZEN OF GOLDEN CITY: WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO RUN IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS?

I PROFOUNDLY DISAGREE WITH THE POLICIES OF THE CURRENT MAYOR AND HIS COUNCIL OF TWELVE.

4

RECENTLY, THEY BROUGHT IN A MERCENARY ARMY TO DEFEND OUR INTERESTS ON EARTH. THAT WAS A HIDEOUS MISTAKE! BY RESORTING TO FORCE, THEY'VE ONLY FUELED PEOPLE'S HATRED OF US.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT, MR. MILLER?

I REFUSE TO BE LECTURED BY ANYONE, ESPECIALLY NOT A MURDERER!

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY? EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

BANKS IS A MURDERER! HE KILLED ONE OF THE BANKS GROUP'S SHAREHOLDERS BY DELIBERATELY PROVOKING AN ACCIDENT!*

YOU LEFT OUT THE PART WHERE THE SHAREHOLDER IN QUESTION HIRED A HIT MAN TO KILL ME FIRST!

THAT'S NO REASON TO TAKE JUSTICE INTO YOUR OWN HANDS! IT'S AGAINST THE LAW! YOU BEHAVED LIKE A COMMON CRIMINAL!

WHAT HAPPENED? WHY'D THE TV GO ON THE FRITZ ALL OF A SUDDEN?

NO IDEA. TRY CHANGING CHANNELS!

GOLDEN CITY CHANNEL «NO SIGNAL»

NO SIGNAL

IT'S NOT COMING FROM OUR TV. THE OTHER CHANNELS ARE WORKING JUST FINE.

SWITCH IT BACK TO THE GOLDEN CITY NETWORK. THE PICTURE MIGHT COME BACK.

45

* SEE BOOK 11

NOPE! STILL NOTHING. NO SOUND OR PICTURE!

HEY! COME LOOK!

WHAT DID YOU SEE? A COMET?

NO, LOOK! GOLDEN CITY'S ON FIRE! THAT'S WHY THEIR NETWORK IS DOWN!

OH, SHIT! WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED UP THERE?

TURN ON THE NEWS. THEY MUST BE COVERING IT.

THIS JUST IN! WE'VE JUST LEARNED THAT A VIOLENT FIRE HAS BROKEN OUT IN A NEIGHBORHOOD OF GOLDEN CITY. AND NOW TO OUR REPORTER ON THE SCENE...

HOW DID THE FIRE START?

APPARENTLY THE CITY WAS STRUCK BY DEBRIS FROM AN UNUSED SATELLITE.

Special Report

OVER EIGHT HUNDRED PIECES OF SPACE DEBRIS ARE ORBITING EARTH AT SPEEDS OF 14,000 MILES PER HOUR, SOME WEIGHING SEVERAL TONS. ONE OF THEM MUST HAVE STRUCK GOLDEN CITY.

46

WHY DIDN'T THE CITY'S MAGNETIC SHIELD WORK? IT'S MEANT TO PROTECT THE CITY FROM THIS KIND OF THING. THAT'S THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S MIND, BUT FOR NOW, NO ONE HAS ANY ANSWERS!

PECQUEUR & MALFIN
SCHELLE